

price by whoever was rich enough to pay for them. The number and quality of the articles exported from France were extravagantly exaggerated. It was, indeed, necessary to take out some of those articles in compliance with the Emperor's wishes, but they were only thrown into the sea. And yet no one had the honesty to tell the Emperor that England sold on the Continent, but bought scarcely anything. The speculation in licenses was carried to a scandalous extent only to enrich a few, and to satisfy the short-sighted views of the contrivers of the system.

This system proves what is written in the annals of the human heart and mind, that the cupidity of the one is insatiable, and the errors of the other incorrigible. Of this I will cite an example, though it refers to a period posterior to the origin of the Continental system. At Hamburg, in 1811, under Davoust's government, a poor man had well-nigh been shot for having introduced into the department of the Elbe a small loaf of sugar for the use of his family, while at the same moment Napoleon was perhaps signing a license for the importation of a million of sugar-loaves.¹

Smuggling on a small scale was punished with death, whilst the Government themselves carried it on extensively. The same cause filled the Treasury with money, and the prisons with victims.

The custom-house laws of this period, which waged open war against rhubarb, and armed the coasts of the Continent

¹ In this same year (1811) Murat, as King of Naples, not only winked at the infringement of the Continental system, but almost openly broke the law himself. His troops in Calabria, and all round his immense line of sea-coast, carried on an active trade with Sicilian and English smugglers. This was so much the case that an officer never set out from Naples to join, without being requested by his wife, his relations or friends, to bring them some English muslins, some sugar and coffee, together with a few needles, penknives, and razors. Some of the Neapolitan officers embarked in really large commercial operations, going shares with the custom-house people who were there to enforce the law, and making their soldiers load and unload the contraband vessels.

The Comte de , a French officer on Murat's staff, was very noble, but very poor, and excessively extravagant. After making several vain efforts to set him up in the world, the King told him one day he would give him the command of all the troops round the Gulf of Salerno; adding that the devil was in it if he could not make a fortune in such a capital smuggling district in a couple of years. The Count took the hint, and did make a fortune. — *Editor of 1836 edition.*